

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUITO 04129 222206Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4821
INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 4129

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PINS EC
SUBJ: CIVIL WAR AT CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

1. ON JUNE 17 A BATTLE BETWEEN OPPOSING COMMUNIST STUDENT FACTIONS DURING STUDENT ASSOCIATION ELECTIONS ON QUITO'S CENTRAL UNIVERSITY CAMPUS RESULTED IN ONE DEATH AND AT LEAST A DOZEN INJURED. ALTHOUGH ACCOUNTS VARY, IT APPEARS THAT GUNFIRE BROKE OUT BETWEEN OPPOSING PRO-SOVIET AND PRO-CHINESE GROUPS ON THE CAMPUS AND THAT THE BATTLE LATER CONTINUED AT THE HOSPITAL TREATING THE WOUNDED. NO GOVERNMENT LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS WERE INVOLVED.

2. THE INCIDENT HAS RECEIVED WIDE NEWSPAPER COVERAGE AND MOST PAPERS HAVE EDITORIALY LAMENTED THE POLITICIZATION OF ECUADOR'S UNIVERSITIES BY EXTREME LEFTIST ELEMENTS. A COMMON THEME HAS BEEN THAT TWO OPPOSING GROUPS DOMINATED BY FOREIGN IDEOLOGIES HAVE DISRUPTED A NATIONAL UNIVERSITY WHICH SHOULD BE CONCERNED WITH ECUADOR AND ITS PROBLEMS.

3. FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT LEFTIST STUDENT AND LABOR ORGANIZATIONS HAVE RUSHED INTO PRINT TO BLAME ONE PARTY OR ANOTHER FOR THE VIOLENCE. MOST NOTABLE WAS CENTRAL UNIVERSITY RECTOR CAMILO MENA'S CHARGE THAT THE SOVIET-LINE STUDENT GROUP WAS GUILTY BOTH OF BEGINNING THE VIOLENCE AND ELECTORAL FRAUD.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 QUITO 04129 222206Z

MENA WAS ELECTED BY MAOIST ELEMENTS AND CONTINUES TO BE SUPPORTED BY THEM.

4. COMMENT: WHATEVER THE TRUE SCENARIO OF THE JUNE 17 VIOLENCE, THE FINAL CONSEQUENCE HAS BEEN TO REINFORCE IN THE MINDS OF THE ECUADOREAN PUBLIC THE NEGATIVE IMAGE OF STUDENT POLITICS AND TO FURTHER WIDEN THE GAP BETWEEN STUDENT FACTIONS. WHILE

THE STUDENTS ARE ENGAGED IN FRENZIED RECRIMINATIONS THEIR
ATTENTION IS TURNED INWARD AND THEIR CAPABILITY TO
SERVE AS ANEFFECTIVEFORCEOF POLITICAL OPPOSITION IS
DIMINISHED. FINALLY,BY SO POINTEDLY DRAWING PUBLIC ATTEN-
TION TO THE UNIVERSITY SCENE THROUGH A PITCHED GUN FIGHT,
STUDENTS HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY REDUCED PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR A SIZABLE
INCREASE IN THE GOE CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNIVERSITY BUDGET, ONE
OF THE MOST URGENT POINTS FACING RECTOR MENA AND THE UNIVER-
SITY ADMINISTRATION.
BLOOMFIELD

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 22-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
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